

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicants cancel claims 1 and 13 and previously withdrawn claims 6-12 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, amend claims 3, 4, and 18-21, and add new claims 22-29. Claims 3-5 and 15-29 are now pending in this application.

In the Office Action,¹ the Examiner rejected claims 1, 13, and 18-21² under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0015580 A1) in view of Moriyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,104,684). The Examiner also allowed claims 3-5 and 15-17. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in this case.

Although Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 13, and 18-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando in view of Moriyama, the rejection is moot in view of the amendments herein. Applicants have canceled claims 1 and 13 and have amended claims 18-20 to depend from allowed claim 5. Furthermore, claim 21 has been amended to be in independent form and to include subject matter of allowed claim 5. Accordingly, claims 3-5 and 15-21 are in *prima facie* condition for allowance.

New claims 22-24 and 26-28 depend from allowable claims 3 and 4, respectively. Furthermore, new independent claims 25 and 29, while of a different scope, include subject matter of allowed claims 3 and 4. Accordingly, claims 22-29 are also deemed allowable.

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

² Applicants note that the Examiner did not indicate that claims 18-21 stand rejected on the Office Action Summary sheet, however, at page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected these claims. Applicants have treated them as such in this Amendment.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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